

Today's News - Wednesday, August 3, 2011

- Big and tall makes for news: Needham queries Adrian Smith about designing the world's tallest building in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia (and why the helipad will be a sky terrace instead) - pix included.
- Gruber offers theories about why - not how - America is destroying its cities, identifying certain "suspects": it "would help understand what needs to be done to revive cities if we understand better the causes of their destruction."
- K. Jacobs visits a "beleaguered Connecticut city" that is "showing signs of real life," and explains why it's a poster child for many of America's "woebegone" cities "crying out not just for civic pride but civic passion."
- NYC's High Line is the poster child for a number of cities looking to turn abandoned rail lines into public spaces; James Corner's caveat: "It's not just, 'Build a cool park and they will come.' It's, 'Build a cool park and connect it to a framework.'"
- King cheers San Francisco's "most ambitious effort yet to improve the large, urban landscape in small, fluid ways": Parkmobiles! (portable landscapes in red steel bins).
- ASLA's federal affairs guru explains why it's so important for Congress to pass a transportation bill - for all users (with some very convincing stats!), and what may happen if it doesn't.
- Design innovation and politics have a lot in common: they both "demand creativity and a strong desire to make a difference, challenge the status quo, and make things better for ordinary people."
- This week, Aucklanders will celebrate the opening of its new waterfront Wynyard Quarter; hopes are high, but it faces some stiff competition from other waterfront venues underway.
- An Auckland architect warns that Wynyard Quarter "is just another reclaimed swamp, ideal for public open space," but a proposal to build a five-star hotel ignores lessons from the Christchurch earthquakes: "architectural sketches may be forgiving but nature is not."
- A new school in Beijing is "a study in landscape architecture as much as in architecture."
- An eyeful of the BMW Guggenheim Lab in NYC's East Village (nary a rat in sight!).
- LEED 2012 opens second public comment period, reflecting some major changes, especially in materials.
- A good reason to head to Croatia this weekend (besides the beach): PROTO/E/CO/LOGICS: Speculative Materialism in Architecture symposium (a rather obtuse title, but an impressive line-up!).
- Eyefuls of winners of the 2011 Parramatta City Ideas on Edge competition (one team from Arkansas!).
- Architect Barbie gets her dream house; the winning team "hopes to encourage more young female architects to flex their design muscles and just to have fun with architecture."
- Call for entries/ RFP: DesCours 2011, AIA New Orleans's 5th annual (very cool) 10-day architecture and art fete.
- We couldn't resist: Unbeige uncovers one of the strangest design lawsuits - having to do with toilet paper (we kid you not): "reading the ruling is honestly a bit fun, given a subject that will make those more juvenile among us a bit giggly, and how bizarre and detailed the whole thing is."

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Kingdom Tower: Adrian Smith Talks Designing World's Tallest Building: ...will be at least 3,280 feet tall, is eclipsing another of Smith's designs, Dubai's Burj Khalifa. By Paul Needham -- Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM); Adrian Smith + Gordon Gill Architecture [slide show] - Huffington Post

Why Did America Destroy Its Great Cities? I don't purport to have definitive answers, but in considering the question, I've identified certain "suspects," certain factors that could have contributed...without claiming this list is exhaustive or definitive...it would help understand what needs to be done to revive cities if we understand better the causes of their destruction. By Frank Gruber - Huffington Post

Love and Money in Bridgeport: The beleaguered Connecticut city is showing signs of real life...what [it] clearly needs is love, which...is exactly the sentiment America's many woebegone cities require. Our bleakest cities cry out not just for civic pride but civic passion. (Oh, yeah, and lots of investment dollars.) By Karrie Jacobs - Metropolis Magazine

Cities See the Other Side of the Tracks: After the success of Manhattan's High Line park, other cities are turning abandoned rail lines into public spaces...renovating an old railway can be the spark that helps improve a neighborhood and attract development...a point in favor of reuse is that it can be cheaper to renovate old rail structures than to tear them down. -- James Corner Field Operations; Diller Scofidio + Renfro - New York Times

'Parkmobiles' bring taste of nature to urban S.F.: ...portable landscapes in red steel bins...a shot of mobile nature...arrayed on blocks around Yerba Buena Gardens...signal San Francisco's most ambitious effort yet to improve the large, urban landscape in small, fluid ways...The idea is to park them in one space for weeks or months, then move on. Benches invite viewers to linger... By John King -- CMG Landscape Architecture [images] - San Francisco Chronicle

From One Crisis to the Next: Congress Must Pass a Transportation Bill for All Users: ...dawdling on the issue is accruing a significant price tag for the nation...75% of the polled mayors would support an increase in the gas tax if a greater share of the funding were invested in bicycle and pedestrian projects...bicycle and pedestrian projects create about 11.4 jobs for every \$1 million spent compared to 7.8 jobs created through road projects. By Roxanne Blackwell, Esq. -- U.S. Conference of Mayors - The Dirt/American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA)

Innovation: Key to nation-building: Both design and politics have similar criteria for success; they demand creativity and a strong desire to make a difference, challenge the status quo and make things better for ordinary people and can contribute immensely towards nation-building. By Praveen Mishra - Ahmedabad Mirror (India)

State of the art on show in prime venue: Aucklanders will see a new part of their city when the first stage of the Wynyard Quarter opens on Saturday...But Super City bosses are unclear what effect other waterfront venues will have on the centre after the Rugby World Cup. It faces competition from two venues at Party Central on Queens Wharf - the \$9.8 million Cloud and the refurbished century-old Shed 10. -- Moller Architects [links to other news] - New Zealand Herald

Why Auckland needs a red zone: Beyond questions about the design of buildings there are other lessons to be learnt from the Christchurch earthquakes...Wynyard Quarter, which is just another reclaimed swamp...ideal for public open space...proposal to build a seven-story...five-star hotel raises different questions...architectural sketches may be forgiving but nature is not. By Tony Watkins - New Zealand Herald

In Beijing, Work Begins on Nature-Inspired School: Garden School may be read as a study in landscape architecture as much as in architecture...The building floats between two gardens: a park on the ground and a farm on the roof. -- OPEN architecture [slide show] - Architectural Record

[Guggenheim and BMW Launch First Pop-Up "Lab" in New York City: The minimalist open-air structure designed by Tokyo-based Atelier Bow-Wow is a pop-up think tank, event space, and pavilion that will offer free \[events\] relating to the theme of "Confronting Comfort" through October 16. \[slide show\]- Architectural Record](#)

[LEED 2012 Second Public Comment Period Opens: Responding to thousands of comments on the first draft, USGBC made major changes to LEED 2012, especially in materials.- Environmental Building News/BuildingGreen.com](#)

[Symposium: PROTO/E/CO/LOGICS: Speculative Materialism in Architecture, Rovinj, Croatia, August 6-7; curated by Alisa Andrasek and Bruno Juricic; participants include Sylvia Lavin, Sanford Kwinter, Patrik Schumacher, Lucy Bullivant, etc.; free registration- Maistra d.d and the Region of Istria](#)

[Winners gallery revealed in Parramatta City design competition: Venice-like islands along Parramatta River, laneway jetties and rooftop gardens were among the winning concepts in the 2011 Ideas on Edge competition...An Expression of Interest will be issued later this year. -- Peter Bednar/Zack Cooley; Rick Hill/Leon McBride/Josh Spillane; Daniel Griffin/Mark Tyrrell \[images, links\]- Architecture & Design \(Australia\)](#)

[AIA Announces the Winner of the AIA Architect Barbie® Dream House™ Design Competition: "We hope to encourage more young female architects to flex their design muscles and just to have fun with architecture." -- Ting Li, Assoc. AIA, LEED AP/Maja Paklar, Assoc. AIA \[link to images\]- American Institute of Architects \(AIA\) / Mattel](#)

[Call for entries/Request for Proposals/RFP: DesCours 2011, the 5th annual 10-day, international contemporary architecture and art event held in "hidden" New Orleans spaces; deadline: August 19- AIA New Orleans](#)

[675,000 Pages, a Dozen Witnesses, and Two Months Later, a Decision on Toilet Paper Design Lawsuit: ...reading \[the ruling\] is honestly a bit fun, given a subject that will make those more juvenile among us a bit giggly, and how bizarre and detailed the whole thing is.- UnBeige](#)

[Book Review: Talkin' 'Bout \(Not\) My Generation: Uplifting Gen X Architects Showcase Pragmatic Optimism: In "New York Dozen: Gen X Architects" by architect Michael J. Crosbie, the framing of each architectural firm is extraordinary. By Norman Weinstein- ArchNewsNow](#)



-- David Chipperfield Architects: The Hepworth Wakefield, Wakefield, UK
-- J. Mayer H. architects: Metropol Parasol, Seville, Spain

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